Amendment and new claims in response to rejection of Claims 9 and 10 under 35 USC § 112.

Please amend the claims as shown in the following "marked up" amended claims and "clean" copy of all the claims.

9.(amended) An apparatus as in Claim 8, wherein the entire coupling means is molded of, or cut from sheets of, an inherently flexible [polymeric material, such as elastomeric plastic or rubber] material.

10.(amended) An apparatus as in Claim 8, wherein the flexible linkage of the coupling means is made of rigid material fabricated [to impart flexibility, such as] in the form of a chain to impart flexibility.

13.(new) An apparatus of Claim 8, wherein the coupling material is rubber.

14.(new) An apparatus of Claim 8, wherein the coupling material is plastic.

15.(new) An apparatus of Claim 8, wherein the coupling material is metal.

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for gathering, picking up and carrying materials comprising
a) two grasping elements which each have shafts with grasping means at one end, and
b) a flexible coupling means which can be moved along the shafts of the grasping elements to connect them together while permitting each of them to rotate along the axes of their shafts and to pivot with respect to each other so that the grasping heads can be brought together or moved apart from each other.

2. An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein the grasping elements have shafts with diameters of 0.5 to 3 inches.

3. An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein the grasping elements have shafts with lengths of two to six feet.

4. An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein each grasping element has a grasping head that consists of tines arrayed to form a rake.

5. An apparatus as in claim 4, wherein the grasping elements are commercially available garden rakes for raking leaves , dirt or other materials.

6. An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein each grasping element has a grasping head fabricated as the head of a shovel from sheets of metal, wood or plastic that extend along the axes of the shafts for three to eighteen inches and extend sidewise equally on both sides of the shaft for a total width of three to twenty four inches.

7. An apparatus as in claim 6, wherein the grasping elements are commercially available shovels for shoveling dirt, snow or other materials.

8. An apparatus as in claim 1, wherein the coupling means consists of two loops that have diameters slightly larger than the diameters of the shafts to be connected and said loops are connected by a flexible linkage means having a length of one fourth to 4 inches.

9. An apparatus as in claim 8, wherein the entire coupling means is molded of, or cut from, sheets of an inherently flexible material.

10. An apparatus as in claim 8, wherein the flexible linkage of the coupling means is made of rigid material fabricated in the form of a chain to impart flexibility.

11. An apparatus as in claim 8, wherein the coupling means comprises loops of material that are connected by flexible material in the form of a band.

12. An apparatus as in claim 8, wherein the loops of the coupling means contain clamping devices that permit them to be moved along the shafts to a desired position and then clamped there to prevent further unwanted movement.

13. An apparatus as in claim 8, wherein the coupling material is rubber.

14. An apparatus as in claim 8, wherein the coupling material is plastic.

15. An apparatus as in claim 8, wherein the coupling material is metal.